

A

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LETTER

TO Mr.

BRAINE

Bc. of Divinity.

Concerning an *Administrator* of
Water-Baptisme.

SIR,

Since *Disputes* were syllogistical, and then to a *Debater*, your *Apprehensions* are too nimble, and your *Learning* too great, and your *Dispute* too great, to debate our difference by a multitude of words; for neither we our selves, nor the *Auditors*, do receive satisfaction. I thought good therefore to proceed in writing, not repeating either you or I said in heat or anger; but to take the *Question* de *Novis*. You enquire after an *Administrator*, which word, nor so much as the word it self is found in all the *Scriptures*, but is a new found word, lately used to disturb the *Members* of God. But we may find the sum of the question in *Scripture* words. By what *Authority* dost thou these things? Sir, this is the sum of your question, and this Sir, was the *Answer* in *Scripture*. *Mat. 23. 33.* and might receive a like Answer, by way of *Question*.

What *Authority* dost thou demand these things? The *Question* was propounded by *Pharisees*, men learned, men of *Honour* and *Honour* amongst the *People*, men in *Honour* and *Honour*; for they were *Priests* and *Levites*, and *Rulers* of the *People*.

People. *John* 1. 19. 24. *John* 3. 1. & 7. 32. 45. 47. 48. & 9. 13. & 11. 47. 48. 57. & 12. 42. & 18. 3. I cannot say they were *Ministers*, but *Commanders*.

They asked this question to *Christ*, the Anointed of the Lord, the Son of God; yet in the eye of men, a *Samaritan*, a *Car-penter's* Son, of no humane Learning; yea, one that was esteem-ed to have a Devil. (*John* 8. 48. *Samar:*) (*Mat.* 13. 55. *Mark* 6. 3. *Carp.*) *Mat.* 13. 54. 56. whence?) *John* 8. 48. *Mat.* 10. 25. *Mark* 3. 22. *Luke* 11. 15. a Devil *Beelzebub*.)

This question was the question in the *Bishops* dayes to all that sought the wayes of *Christ*, or endeavoured to propagate the Truth. This question is the great question, the main question of the Church of *Rome*, and is yet the question amongst us; intimating that there is no Authority, but what cometh from Man, or is successively by Man. Alas poor men! The workings of the spirit are invisible to humane sight. The spirit bloweth where it listeth. *John* 3. and *Christ* is a *Priest* for ever after the Order of *Melchizedeck*. Shall we ask Authority of Man to be wise, or honest, or just? This was the folly the *Parliament* first ran in, when those corrupt men were in it, that cost so much blood. When they asked leave of the *King* to discharge their Consciences, to make just Lawes to discharge their Trust, and ease the grievances of the People, for which they were called.

Well, *Christ* answers them with a question.

The *Baptisme* of *John*, was it of God or Man?

Par. 36 *John* had Authority from God, but they knew it not, and (probably) had they not feared the People would have affirmed his *Baptisme* to be his own presumption and heresie. For the Word came to *John* in the *Wilderness*. (*Luke* 3. 2.) and *John* wrought no miracle. (*John* 10. 41.) yet the People (whom the *Pharisees* judged accursed. (*John* 7.) and the *Publicans* justified God, in being baptized of him; But the *Pharisees* and *Lawyers* are said to reject the *Counsel* of God against themselves, in being not baptized of him. (*Luke* 7. 29. 30.) yet *St.* there was no written word for *John's* Authority to baptize. Only an obscure Prophecie which they could not understand.



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not any but by the immediate Spirit of God, or the Son of God, to interpret. The voice of one crying in the *Wilderness*, &c. (*Isay 40. 3.*) there is nothing but a voice, and that in the *Wilderness*. Yet this voice in the *Wilderness* sets up an Ordinance, the Ordinance of Baptism, for the remission of sins. (*Luke 3. 3.*) justified by sinners, condemned by zealous and learned *Pharisees* and *Lawyers*. *Luke 7. 29. 30.* The People stood not disputing with *John* about his Authority, or how he could prove that the Word came to him in the *Wilderness*, and who made him an *Administrator*. Nor did they cavil at him for striking at their chief and main privilege, of being Sons of *Abraham*, which they and all the world knew they were. But the People asked him, saying, what shall we do then? (*verse 10.*) They considered, that what he spake was honest and reasonable, and full of Piety and Holiness. It was fit that men should repent; for their Conscience told them they had sinned: and finding the substance true, they never quarrelled with the circumstance of Authority, yet they had then a visible Authority amongst them ordained of God. *Annas* and *Caiaphas* were *High-Priests*, and the *Priests* lips were to preserve knowledge.

Rom.
102.
Phil.
3. 6.

Luke
3. 8.

Sir, I come near home, you have ingenuously and publickly acknowledged *Water-Baptism*, an Ordinance of *Christ*, and that it is necessary, and it is only due unto *Believers*; but you allow no *Administrator*, because there hath been no visible succession. I beseech you in the love of *Christ* to abate of the earnestness of your spirit, in what you have been so long endeared unto; and now the more by having been heated therein by *Disputes*. Look upon the business *de novo*, as if you never had heard, or been engaged to either side. And the Lord in mercy to your soul, and to his Church, to the which you might be so bright and shining a Lamp, (if once perswaded of the truth) grant you a clear and impartial understanding of his will and pleasure.

102.
102.
102.

Sir, God had a Church in the World, though in the *Wilderness*. And the Church was a Church, a visible Church in itself though in the *Wilderness*, and out from the manifest and lately Cities and Buildings of men. And the Church was led

Rev 12. in the Wilderness, (though the Habitation of wild Beasts.) And
14. the Gates of Hell neither were, nor shall be ever able to prevail
Mat. 16 against it. If in the Wilderness, where form, and order, & decency
12. could not be, much more in the City, in heavenly *Jerusalem*, (the
 Mother of us all. *Gal. 4. 26.*) where God is our light, *Rev.*
21. 23. The God of Order, *1 Cor. 14. 33.*) Therefore, whe-
 ther in City or in Wilderness, there is a Church, and she is fed:
 yea, and some out of the Wilderness, whilst she her self is in
 the Wilderness. *Rev. 12. 17.* (a Remnant of her seed.) And such
 are they who keep the Commandements of God, and have the
 Testimony. (not of Men) but of *Jesus Christ. (ibid.)*

When the *Israelites* murmured for want of water, and that
Moses gave it them out of the Rock, they asked not whether
 they should drink in sanctified Vessels, or stayed till *Moses* gave
 them every one their proportion. They would not let the wa-
 ter run by them so in waste. When we read the word of God
 (and not of man) that tells us *Jesus Christ* came into the world
 to save sinners, *Jo: 3. 1 Tim.*) and he is for salvation to the ends
 of the Earth. *Acts 13. 47.* And that whosoever believeth and is
 baptized, shall be saved. *Mark 16. 16.* And that unless a Man be
 born of Water and of the spirit, he can in no wise enter into
 the Kingdom of Heaven. *Jo: 3. 5.* And that we finding experi-
 mentally that we can be baptized if we will, there having ne-
 ver been any restraint in the word upon the *Baptizer*. We can-
 not but hear the voyce of *Christ, John 10. 2.* We cannot neg-
 lect so great salvation, we cannot belie the abilities and provi-
 dence of God offered unto us. It is not said, whomsoever ye
 baptize; but whosoever is baptized, *Mark 16.* Whosoever
 worketh Righteousness is righteous, not he that saith *L. Z.* but
 he that doth the will of the Father. (*Mat. 7. 21.*) His Servants
 ye are to whom ye obey. Not the Commands of God, but our
 Obedience makes us his Servants. If therefore ye ask by what
 Authority we obey the Commands of God? Answer, it is by
 the Authority and power of God. For the word of God came
 to *John* in the Wilderness, and the word of God is come unto
 us, whether in the Wilderness, or out of the Wilderness, and
 you do not deny it to be the word of God. All power is of
 God.

1. John
3. 7.
Rom. 6.
17.

God. (*Rom. 13. 2. Jo: 19. 11.*) If therefore we are baptized, and it is his Command we should be baptized: what do we question the Authority of his Command? The hair of the head falls not to the ground without his providence; (*Mat. 23. 10.*) *Christ* is with us to the end of the world, (*Mat. 28. 20.*) He hath not left us comfortless, (*Jo: 14. 18.*) Blessed are they that believe and have not seen, *John 20. 29.* We cannot but have Authority to be honest, to be just, to be righteous, to be faithful, to be obedient. It is ridiculous to affirm the contrary. Every man that is wounded hath Authority to stanch his blood, or to do the like charity to another, (if he can) without a Surgeon. The word of God declareth the Command of Teaching and Preaching, and disciplining in the Active, (*Mat. 23. 10. Mark 16. 15.*) But of baptizing in the Passive, or in *Alti 2.* principle, (*ibid. verse 16. Alti. 16. 15. 33. and 18. 8. & 8. 41.* &c.)

Preaching be more then Baptizing, then whosoever may preach, may Baptize.

Preaching is more then Baptizing, as may appear, 1 *Cor. 7. Alti. 10. 48.*

For the liberty of preaching, whether *καρποποιῶν ἐν ἡμῖν*, or *καρπῷ*. You may read it in *Alti. 8. 4. 5. & 9. 20. 23* as ever *Paul* was baptized, and 15. 21. and *Phil. 1. 14. 15. Alti. 18.* *1 Cor. 14. 31. (Alti. 4. 31. and 5. 20. καρπῷ)* the *A. 26. 28.* he did *καρπῷ* as well as *καρποποιῶν* and false Brethren, *James* did *καρποποιῶν* (*Alti. 15. 21. Phil. 1. 15.*) as well

truth is, every man hath Authority to speak truth, and that Truth which God will have published to the World. And if man will not do it, the very stones of *Luke 19.* will. The Heavens declare the glory of God, and the elements sheweth his handy-work, *Psal. 19.* so that their voice is gone out to the uttermost ends of the Earth. *Rom. 10. 15.* If we can preach unless he be sent. *Rom. 10. 15.* If we then are sent; for none can come unto *Christ*, unless they know him, (*Jo: 6. 44. 45.*) and all that the Father hath sent shall come unto him, (*Jo. 6. 37.*) for the Gospel

is hid to none but those that are lost. 2 Cor. 4. 3. And as without *Christ* we can do nothing; (Jo. 15. 5.) so we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard. *Mat. 4. 20.* The voice of the *Crierion* hath spoken to us, the voice of *Providence*, the voice of *Conscience*, the voice of his *Word*, (the voice of *God*.) What, should we boast of *Visions* of *Revelations*, of *Dreams*, of *Chastisements*, of *Sufferings*, of *Miracles*, of *Providence*, of *Prayers*? yet we have a more sure word of *Prophecy*, 1 Pet. 1. 19. And *Christ* himself saith; that if ye believe not the *Scriptures*, how shall ye believe my words. Jo. 5. 47? Words which shall judge us in the last day. Jo. 10. Words so unchangeable, that *Heaven* and *Earth* shall passe away before our yet shall passe. *Mat. 5. 18.* That whosoever addeth, the judgments and plagues of the *Revelation* shall be added; and whosoever taketh away, his Name shall be taken out of the book of life, (*Rev. 22. 18. 19.*) yea though an *Apostle*, or an *Angel* shall preach any other Gospel, let him be accursed. *Gal. 1. 8.* This word of *God* saith, Whosoever believeth and is baptized, shall be saved; and whosoever believeth not, shall be damned. (*Mark 16. 16.*) Shall this word have any more Authority, because this or that *Minister* confirms it? Man cannot make the word of *God* true, nor can the *Sonnes* of man, give Authority to the Word of *God*. But whomsoever the word of *God* emboldeneth, empowereth to be a *Witness*, a *Messenger*, *Preacher*, though a *Child*, (*Mat. 21. 16.*) though an *Earthly Vessel*, (*1 Cor. 4. 7.*) though a *fool*, (*1 Cor. 3. 18.*) though a thing of nought. (*1 Cor. 1. 28.*) He will by them praise, distribute his heavenly Treasure, confound the wisdom of the World, and bring to nought things that are. If we be for obeying the Command of *God*, are this day accused, shall be said to those that obey not? to those that forbid the Commands? to those that oppose and speak evil of the obedience? Sir, I beseech you make hast, and bring in that *Treasure* *Christ* hath intrusted you with into the publick Stock of *Church*. And by how much you perceive any weakness

so much the more do you haillen to strengthen us, that I
may ever be,

Learned, Sir,

Your very faithful Servant
in the Lord,

August, 1650.

PETER CHAMBERLEN.

POSTSCRIPT.

The *Heavens* and the Earth were brought forth by the word
of God. (*Gen. 1.*) Man liveth not by bread only, but by every
word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God. (*Mat. 4.*)
The word of God hath made us, and we are the workmanship
of his hands. (*Eph. 1. 10.*) The word hath said, that where so-
ever two or three are gathered together in the name of *Christ*,
he is there in the midst of them. (*Mat. 18. 20.*) If therefore
we are assembled by the power of that word testified, in that
we therefore do it, and not by the Traditions of men or Cu-
stoms, what that an Assembly of *Christ*? And if ought were
wanting of a circumstance, hath not he promised that what he
shall consent so on earth his Father shall do it for them? (*Mat.*
18. 19.) Hath he not powred of his spirit on all flesh? (*Acts. 2.*)
Has his Arm shortned, or his promise broken? Consider & obey,
that which you resist not the power and spirit of God, whereby
you are sealed. What Authority was there for those that were
ordered to preach, or for *Philip* to baptize. *Acts 8.*

FINIS.

(7)
much the more do you hasten to strengthen us, that I
ever be

Learned Sir,
Your very humble servant
in the Book
PETER CHAMBERLEN

1650

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The word of God hath made us, and we are the workmanship
(Eph. 2.) The word hath said, that whatsoever
these are gathered together in the name of Christ,
there is the will of them (Mat. 18. 20.) If therefore
we are assembled by the power of that word testified, in what
manner do we, and not by the Tradition of men or Cu-
stom? Is it an Assembly of Christ? And if so, ought we
to be of a circumference, hath not he promised that where a
few are gathered together, I will be in the midst of them (Mat.
18. 20.) Hath he not promised of his Spirit on all flesh? (Act. 2.)
Is he not promised, or his promise broken? Consider & obey,
that you resist not the power and Spirit of God, whereby
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